

Tips for successful breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best choice available for providing the nutrients your growing baby needs. Babies who are breastfed have less illness, stomach troubles, bowel problems and have improved growth, development and IQ compared to babies that are formula-fed.

Getting started

Breastfeed within an hour after delivery - Babies are most alert and ready to nurse soon after delivery. The rich colostrum helps babies with their first bowel movement and provides antibodies to protect against infection. Colostrum is all that babies need in the first few days of life.

Pacifiers and bottles - Avoid giving pacifiers and bottles for the first 4 weeks. Bottle nipples and pacifiers teach the baby bad sucking habits which may cause sore nipples for mom. Formula decreases mom's milk production or can lead to breast engorgement. Formula also may contribute to allergies. Mom's milk is 70-90 percent water, so water bottles aren't needed.

Positioning and latch - Good positioning and latch will help prevent problems.

- Mom needs to be comfortable. The baby's head should be directly facing the breast with the stomach pulled in close to mom. Use pillows to bring baby to breast level.
- The baby needs to take in as much areola (dark part of the breast) as possible.
- Support the breast by placing 4 fingers underneath and thumb on top in back of the areola.
- Tickle the baby's lower lip and wait for baby to open wide as if they were yawning.
- Tickle the baby's top lip and wait for baby to open wide as if they were yawning.
- Quickly bring the baby to breast.
- Baby's lips should not be folded in but relaxed and the tongue cupped under the breast.

Feeding guidelines - Nursing often is the key to making plenty of milk. Use the following as a guideline, but remember each baby is different. *Watch the baby, not the clock.*

- Feedings - Every 1-3 hours or 8-15 times every 24 hours
- Wet diapers - 5-7 per day
- Bowel movements - 2-5 per day at first, fewer after 6 weeks
- Growth spurts - at 2 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months - Nursing often during growth spurts will increase milk supply. Most babies will be fussy during these times but mom needs to keep nursing, not add a bottle. Remember, mom's body will naturally make plenty of milk to meet baby's growing needs.

Support - Getting support during the first month is helpful. New moms are often tired and overwhelmed and need plenty of rest and relaxation. Family and friends can help with shopping, cleaning and cooking, or help mom relax with a neck, shoulder or back massage.

WIC breastfeeding peer counselors

Peer counselors help WIC mothers with common concerns like getting baby comfortably positioned and latched, returning to work or school, learning how to breastfeed in public, and dealing with unsupportive family members. Peer counselors are WIC moms too, and they understand the breastfeeding challenges that women may face. Counselors are available 7 days a week, and may be contacted at (360) 397-8040.

Resources

Clark County

- Breastfeeding helpline – (360) 297-8050
- Breastfeeding peer counselors – (360) 397-8040
- Maternity Support Services – (360) 397-8440 ext. 8255
- WIC Program – (360) 397-8459

Kaiser Permanente – (360) 571-3017

LaLeche League – (360) 514-6773

Legacy Salmon Creek – (360) 487-4050

Nursing Mothers Council – (360) 750-0656

Southwest Washington Medical Center – (360) 514-4027

Helpful Web sites

- Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington www.hmhbwa.org
 - LaLeche League International www.lalecheleague.org
 - National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding
 - National Women's Health Information Center www.4woman.gov/breastfeeding
 - Nursing Mother Support Group www.breastfeeding.com
- United States Breastfeeding Committee www.usbreastfeeding.org